

DRAFT COMPATIBILITY DETERMINATION

USE: Field Trials

REFUGE NAME: Parker River National Wildlife Refuge

ESTABLISHING AUTHORITY: Migratory Bird Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. §715d)

REFUGE PURPOSE: "...for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds." (16 U.S.C. §715d)

MISSION OF THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM:

To administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans. (16 U.S.C. §3901(b))

DESCRIPTION OF USE

(a) What is the use? This activity is conducted by an organized group, generally related to the use of dogs in retrieving game. Trials are conducted in the field under natural conditions as normally experienced during the hunting of waterfowl. **Is the use a priority public use?** The actual Field Trials activity is not a priority public use however the purpose is to reduce loss of waterfowl during waterfowl hunting by providing training opportunities to waterfowl hunters and retriever dogs. Therefore this activity directly supports a priority public use (hunting).

(b) Where would the use be conducted? This activity takes place at Nelson Island (Area C) on the Refuge.

(c) When would the use be conducted? This is a one day event taking place in early April and usually runs from 8:00am to 6:00pm..

(d) How would use be use be conducted? Event consists of simulating an actual hunting experience judging the dog's ability and skill in retrieving downed game. No live firearms are permitted during this event, only a .22 cal. blank starter pistol is used. The game used for the simulation is shackled domestic pigeon and or mallard ducks certified as disease free.

(e) Why is this use being proposed? Activity does not detract from the purposes of the Refuge. Activity is regulated to minimize disturbance and does not conflict in terms of time or space with other recreational activities. Activity is wildlife oriented and directly supports a priority public use (hunting) by improving the retrieval of downed waterfowl through the use of well trained dogs, minimizing waterfowl crippling losses.

AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES: Event is held at Nelson Island which is well suited for this activity to take place. A parking lot and gravel road provides access and parking for the participants with approximately 20 individuals participating. This activity is within the budget and staffing capabilities of the Refuge to manage.

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS OF THE USE: Some disturbance of wildlife found in the area may occur from the activity taking place. Presence of wildlife at this time of year is reduced. No actual breeding is occurring. The event site is relatively remote and not within a general public use area.

PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT:

This Compatibility Determination is provided for public comment for a 14-day period, from December 15 to 29, 2004. Availability of the draft CD is advertised through a legal notice in the local newspaper, press release, flyers at the Refuge entrance gate and other public areas, and through the Refuge's web site.

DETERMINATION (check one below):

_____ Use is Not Compatible

 X Use is Compatible with the Following Stipulations

STIPULATIONS NECESSARY TO ENSURE COMPATIBILITY:

- Event is scheduled during the early spring prior to the nesting season, and before the full waterfowl or shorebird migration takes place.
- Event site is remote and not within a general public use area.

Signature – Refuge Manager: _____
(Signature and Date)

Concurrence – Regional Chief: _____
(Signature and Date)

Mandatory 10 – year Reevaluation Date: ____Dec. 31, 2009_____